(b) As per information available in this Department, there are 24 Contracting Parties to the 1998 agreement as on date.

(c) The advantages that can accrue to the country are:

(i) Design specifications of vehicles do not have to be changed to meet country specific regulations.

(ii) Common specifications of vehicle parts would reduce the cost of development/production, and retail price of vehicles. It will also make approval procedures easier, expand the scope of the market and provide the consumers with a wider range of choice.

(iii) It would aid to the forces of competition among manufacturers, leading to increased supply of vehicles with better performance and economy of scales.

(iv) It will enhance our access to a set of benchmark regulations to measure safety and environmental performance of vehicles, domestically manufactured/imported and also facilitate export of motor vehicles.

Users of National Highways

1007. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government proposes to implement a scheme to escort users of National Highways for their safety;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Law and order is a State subject.

Hoardings alongwith National Highways

1008. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a large number of hoardings/ display boards have been erected by advertisers alongwith national highways in Punjab causing various types of problems;